



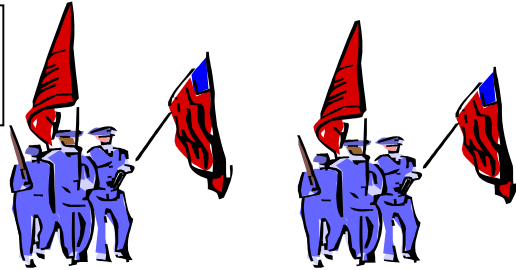
## U.S. ARMY CONTRACTING AGENCY (ACA) NEWSLETTER

### "OUR TEAM IS GROWING"

Volume 1, Issue 13

May 2003

#### THE ORIGINS OF MEMORIAL DAY



Three years after the Civil War ended, on May 5, 1868, the head of an organization of former Union soldiers and sailors - the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR) - established Decoration Day as a time for the nation to decorate the graves of the war dead with flowers. Maj. Gen. John A. Logan declared it should be May 30. The first large observance was held that year at Arlington National Cemetery, across the Potomac River from Washington, D.C. The cemetery already held the remains of 20,000 Union dead and several hundred Confederate dead.

The ceremonies centered around the mourning-draped veranda of the Arlington mansion, once the home of Gen. Robert E. Lee. Gen. and Mrs. Ulysses S. Grant and other Washington officials presided. After speeches, children from the Soldiers' and Sailors' Orphan Home and members of the GAR made their way through the cemetery, strewing flowers on both Union and Confederate graves, reciting prayers and singing hymns.

### Local Observances Claim To Be First

Local springtime tributes to the Civil War dead already had been held in various places. One of the first occurred in Columbus, Miss., April 25, 1866, when a group of women visited a cemetery to decorate the graves of Confederate soldiers who had fallen in battle at Shiloh. Nearby were the graves of Union soldiers, neglected because they were the enemy. Disturbed at the sight of the bare graves, the women placed some of their flowers on those graves, as well.

Today cities located in the North and the South claim to be the original birthplace of Memorial Day first recognized in the year 1866. Both Macon and Columbus, Georgia, claim the title, as well as Richmond, Virginia. The village of Boalsburg, Pa., claims it began there two years earlier. A stone in a Carbondale, Ill., cemetery carries the

statement that the first Decoration Day ceremony took place there on April 29, 1866. Carbondale was the wartime home of Gen. Logan. Approximately 25 places have been named in connection with the origin of Memorial Day, many of them in the South where most of the war dead were buried.

## **Official Birthplace Declared**

In 1966, Congress and President Lyndon Johnson declared Waterloo, N.Y., the "birthplace" of Memorial Day. There a ceremony on May 5, 1866, was reported to have honored local soldiers and sailors who had fought in the Civil War. Businesses closed and residents flew flags at half-mast. Supporters of Waterloo's claim say earlier observances in other places were either informal, not community-wide or one-time events.

By the end of the 19th century, Memorial Day ceremonies were being held on May 30 throughout the nation. State legislatures passed proclamations designating the day. The Army and Navy adopted regulations for proper observance at their facilities. It was not until after World War I, however, that the day was expanded to honor those who have died in all American wars. In 1971 Memorial Day was declared a national holiday by an act of Congress, though it is still often called Decoration Day. It was then also placed on the last Monday in May, as were some other federal holidays.

## **Some States Have Confederate Observances**

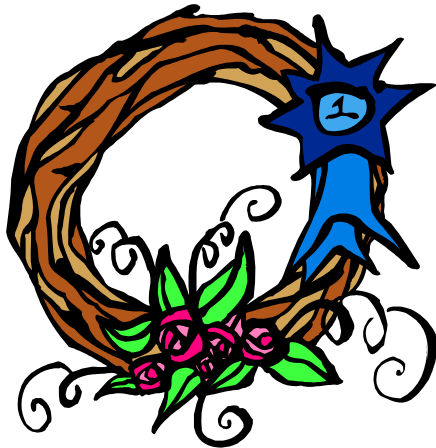
Many Southern states also have their own days for honoring the Confederate dead. Mississippi celebrates Confederate Memorial Day the last Monday of April, Alabama on the fourth Monday of April, and Georgia on April 26. North and South Carolina observe it May 10, Louisiana on June 3 and Tennessee calls that date Confederate Decoration Day. Texas celebrates Confederate Heroes Day January 19 and Virginia calls the last Monday in May Confederate Memorial Day.

Gen. Logan's order for his posts to decorate graves in 1868 "with the choicest flowers of springtime" urged: "We should guard their graves with sacred vigilance. ... Let pleasant paths invite the coming and going of reverent visitors and fond mourners. Let no neglect, no ravages of time, testify to the present or to the coming generations that we have forgotten as a people the cost of a free and undivided republic."

The crowd attending the first Memorial Day ceremony at Arlington National Cemetery was approximately the same size as those that attend today's observance, about 5,000 people. Then, as now, small American flags were placed on each grave - a tradition followed at many national cemeteries today. In recent years, the custom has grown in many families to decorate the graves of all departed loved ones.

The origins of special services to honor those who die in war can be found in antiquity. The Athenian leader Pericles offered a tribute to the fallen heroes of the Peloponnesian War over 24 centuries ago that could be applied today to the 1.1 million Americans who have died in the nation's wars: "Not only are they commemorated by columns and inscriptions, but there dwells also an unwritten memorial of them, graven not on stone but in the hearts of men."

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### **ACA Uses ICE to Publicize FY03 Year-end Cut-off Dates and Offers Other Enhancements to Customers**

The Army Contracting Agency (ACA) recently began publicizing special events and announcements of interest to customers using the Interactive Customer Evaluation (ICE) System. The first such announcements publicize cut-off dates for fiscal year 2003 acquisitions. Each Directorate of Contracting and Regional Contracting Center tailored the announcements to their individual office's capabilities and limitations and posted them to the ICE Customer Comment Card for their activity. To view cut-off dates for a specific activity, find the office using the directory of ICE locations, then go to **Service Provider List**, then click on the **Info** icon near the right edge, then click on the highlighted **Events and Announcements** text.

Customers can also view the "track record" of any ACA activity, region, or command by accessing the ICE web site, locating the activity, region, or command on the listing of **Army ICE Sites & Communities**. Clicking on the name of the activity, region, or command will bring up that site's Welcome Page. Clicking on the link near the bottom of the Welcome Page titled "**Site Report for ... (the Region or Command)**" opens the **Service Provider Summary** for that region or command and displays the number of responses and satisfaction percentages. Clicking on a specific activity from the **Service Provider Summary** will display a more detailed report including number and percentages of responses to each question on the customer comment card.

Another ICE enhancement is the capability for individual customer comment card users to identify themselves as Government Employee or Contractor/Vendor. This will permit Service Provider managers to better track their success in meeting the needs and expectations of all their customers.

Questions concerning any aspect of ICE implementation by ACA may be directed to the ACA ICE Manager at (703) 681-1047 (DSN 761) or [BILL.SWAN@US.ARMY.MIL](mailto:BILL.SWAN@US.ARMY.MIL).

**FORT BRAGG**



## Secretary of the Army Award

The Fort Bragg Director of Contracting, Ms. Sandra Aman, is the recipient of the Secretary of the Army SADBUS of the Year Award in 2003. She is an active contributor to all aspects of the Small Business Program and is directly responsible for many innovative ideas and initiatives to improve small and disadvantaged business participation with the Government. Through proactive leadership and genuine interest in the community, Ms. Aman strives for continuous improvement to the Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization Program on Fort Bragg. Her time in the work environment and in the community is spent fostering relationships to improve the standing of Small and Disadvantage Businesses both locally and nationwide. Congratulations to our Director for this well-deserved award.

## Army Community of Excellence

The XVIII Airborne Corps and Fort Bragg is the recipient of the coveted Army Community of Excellence Award for 2003. Several of the DOC personnel traveled to Washington, D.C. as part of the Fort Bragg delegation receiving the award at the Pentagon. As a vital member of the Fort Bragg community, the Directorate of Contracting is an active contributor to the standards of excellence, which merited this prestigious award. Congratulations to Fort Bragg Contracting, ACA, SR.

## Ft Benning Directorate of Contracting Good/Bad News!

Good for Shirley, bad for the DOC... Shirley K. Pierce, Procurement Analyst, Ft Benning DOC, has put in her application for retirement effective 3 July 2003, after 33 years of federal service. Shirley has been a conscientious member of the acquisition

workforce since July 1980, back when the DOC was called the "Procurement Division, Directorate of Industrial Operations." In a developmental position GS1102-05/07, Shirley acquired extensive knowledge of all aspects of acquisition under the Armed Services Procurement Regulations (ASPR) through formal and on-the-job training. She processed supply, service, and construction requirements under the cradle-to-grave concept. Through the years, Shirley was assigned numerous positions of additional responsibilities and promoted accordingly. She has been contract administrator and Contracting Officer on the Dining Facilities contract; she has been the Chief, Contract Administration Division, supervising seven contract administrators and performing contracting officer duties. Shirley was assigned as a GS12 Procurement Analyst in August 1995 and immediately set about formalizing policies and procedures for standardized use of SAACONS and its reports. With her oversight, DD350 errors were almost nil. In 1998, her efforts were invaluable in the conversion from SAACONS to SPS/PD2. Her exceptional abilities were evidenced in many in-depth reviews of large dollar solicitations that went to TRADOC. Ms. Pierce has a Bachelor of Science Degree in Business Administration and is a certified Level III Contracting Professional. Her knowledge and expertise will be greatly missed by this organization and the supported units at Fort Benning.

## **Fort Benning Directorate of Contracting**

Several contract specialists had mentioned to Jackie Hearn, our Systems Administrator, that they were receiving numerous calls from customers regarding the status of their Purchase Requests (PRs). On her own initiative, Jackie developed a database that reflects when a purchase request has been released on a solicitation and/or award. She took the initiative one step further by establishing an Internet hotlink for use by resource managers and customers to determine the status of their purchase requests. Jackie was selected as a local intern in Oct 01 and has been the singular most important player in standing up the Ft Benning SPS/PD2 server and taking the Directorate into the completely paperless operation. As an example of her outstanding skills, ability and dedication, she continued to serve as the administrator of our SPS/PD2 system while completing mandatory training for her GS1102 certification and required training from AMS to administer the SPS/PD2 system, including the interfaces with EDI/EDA and CAPS. Ms. Hearn's dedication to customer service is evidenced by the innumerable hours she spent setting up and teaching others to setup and maintain the SPS permissions and upgrades. Her impact on coworkers is apparent in the increased efficiency, skill and abilities of the contract specialists in the operation of the system. Her foresight to create the PR adhoc program will be a great time-saver for our Directorate during year-end closeout when customers need timely feedback on obligation of funds. It will also assist the Directorate in providing the best customer service possible.

## Thrift Savings Plan Open Season



The current Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) Open Season began on 15 April and ends on 30 June. Employees that have retirement coverage under FERS or CSRS are eligible to contribute to the TSP. You must initiate your TSP transaction either on the ABC-C website or through the ABC-C telephone system.

The limits of contributions remain at 8% for CSRS employees and 13% for FERS employees. If you decide to contribute an even dollar amount, you need to ensure the amount will not exceed the percentage you are allowed as well as the overall limit of TSP contributions of \$12,000 for the year 2003.

To see when changes you elect will be effective, please review the chart below. Terminations of contributions are effective at the end of the pay period in which the termination transaction is initiated.

<b>Created</b>	<b>Effective</b>	<b>Pay Week</b>
15 Apr-31 May	1 Jun	23-27 Jun
1-14 Jun	15 Jun	7-11 Jul
15-28 Jun	29Jun	21-25Jul
29-30 Jun	13 Jul	4-8 Aug

If you have not yet made an election during this open season, it is not too late!

**For more TSP information, go to [www.tsp.gov](http://www.tsp.gov) or <https://www.abc.army.mil>.**

### Thrift Savings Plan Catch Up Contributions

Have you read about the TSP Catch Up opportunity? If you are contributing the maximum amount to TSP and are 50 years of age or older, this may apply to you!

Employees that are eligible and elect to contribute additional funds to their TSP are limited in the amount that can be contributed per year. This amount does not affect the regular contribution limits for the TSP open season elections.

Year	Maximum Contribution
2003	\$2,000
2004	\$3,000
2005	\$4,000
2006 and after	\$5000*

**\*May be adjusted to reflect inflation**

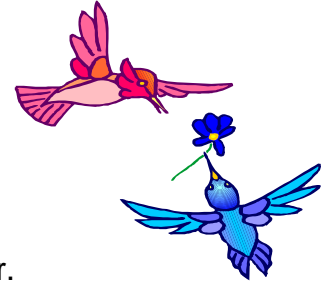
More information will be coming soon to clarify when the catch up contributions can be started.

## ”**“HAIL AND FAREWELL”**”

Welcome to the following personnel who have joined the HQ ACA staff, COL George Blackwell, Ms. Melissa Rider, Director of Contract Policy and Support, Mr. Ed Thomas, Incoming XO, Carlton Shivers, Sandy Swynenberg, and Mark Thomas who have joined the Resource Management Directorate.



”Special Birthday” to- Barbara Crites and Betty Wucher.



## **“SPECIAL EVENTS”**

The 228th Army Birthday Ball is scheduled for June 21, 2003 and is open to all Active Duty, Reserve, National Guard, Department of the Army civilians, Family Members, Retirees, and Veterans. This year's Army Ball will include feature performances from the US Army Soldiers Show, performing groups from the US Army Field Band including "The Jazz Ambassadors", "The Soldier's Chorus", and "The Volunteers" ... and a special guest artist! There is a no-host reception including a cash bar, followed by a three-course dinner with wine, entertainment, and dancing until 1:00 am.

**Time:** 5:30 pm to 1:00 am

**Location:** The Ball will be at the [Washington Hilton & Towers](#), 1919 Connecticut Ave., NW, Washington, DC, 1-202-483-3000. If you desire to stay at the hotel, the Hilton offers a discounted room rate of \$125.00 for Army Birthday Ball participants. For reservations call: (202) 483-3000. To take advantage of the discounted rate, you must mention that you will be attending the Army Birthday Ball. Directions to the Washington Hilton and Towers can be found [here](#).

**Transportation:** Free shuttle service from the Pentagon to the Washington Hilton and Towers is provided for Army Birthday Ball participants. Shuttles will depart from the Pentagon South Parking lot. Buses will depart every ten minutes starting at 4:45 pm; with the last bus departing the Pentagon at 6:30 pm. Return bus service will

begin when the entertainment ends at approximately 10:00 pm.

**Parking:** Commercial parking is available at the Hilton and other facilities close by. The Hilton offers a special fixed priced of \$9.00 for this event. However, parking is limited and is available on a "first come, first serve" basis. Prices at other facilities generally range from \$11.00 to \$17.00 for the evening.

**Registration and Tickets:** Tickets for the Army Birthday Ball are \$50.00 each. We offer discounted tickets (\$15.00 each) to U.S. Army SSG (E6) and DoD Army Civilian's (GS-7), and below. Tickets will not be issued. You will be assigned a confirmation number for the event, after you register.

You must have an Army Knowledge Online account to register for the Army Birthday Ball. For more information and registration - [click here to sign up for a FREE Army Knowledge Online \(AKO\) account](#), and visit the Birthday Ball web site. All Active Duty, Reserve, National Guard, Government civilians, Family Members, Military Retirees and Veterans are authorized an AKO account. If you are a new user to AKO please follow the directions provided on the sign-on page.

If you have difficulty in signing-on and obtaining an AKO account, please call the Army Birthday Ball customer support desk at: (703) 604-2090, or send a message to [ArmyBirthday.Ball@us.army.mil](mailto:ArmyBirthday.Ball@us.army.mil). Please be sure to include your name, phone number, and e-mail address so that we may contact you.

If you already have an Army Knowledge Online Account, log onto the [AKO Portal](#) and select the "228th Army Birthday Ball Information and Registration Channel".

**Attire:** Formal Evening Wear, Military: Dress Blues / Dress Mess

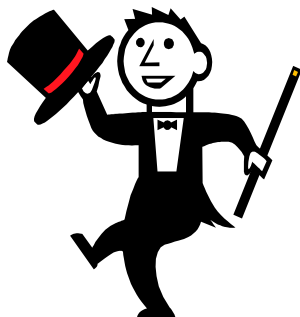
## Schedule:

Reception: 5:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.

Dinner: 7:00 to 8:30 p.m.

Entertainment: 9:00 to 10:00 p.m.

Dancing: 10:00 p.m. to 1:00 a.m.





## ACA TEAM POINTS OF CONTACT

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### A Word from the Editor

We would like to involve our readers in playing a more active role in guiding the publication. As always, we continue to invite our readers to provide their ideas, views, and opinions. If you have comments and/or suggestions for the newsletter on how we can continue to improve the publication, please don't hesitate to let me know. Email your comments to [Shirlee.Knickerbocker@SAALT.army.mil](mailto:Shirlee.Knickerbocker@SAALT.army.mil) or call me at DSN 761-9158. DISTRIBUTION D: Distribution authorized to DoD and US DoD Contractors only. Other requests for this document shall be referred to: U.S. Army Contracting Agency, ATTN: SFCA (Nicki Knickerbocker), 5109 Leesburg Pike, Skyline 6, Suite 302, Falls Church, VA 22041-3201, or request by Email to [shirlee.knickerbocker@saalt.army.mil](mailto:shirlee.knickerbocker@saalt.army.mil).

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